

WELLNESS WEDNESDAY

WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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Family Meals: Small Investment, Big Payoff

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If you're concerned about what your child does (and doesn't) eat, the solution could be as close as your kitchen table. Gathering around the table to eat as a family has all kinds of benefits. Family meals allow parents to be role models who create a supportive environment that promotes healthy eating.

Family meals don't just mean better nutrition. Children of families who regularly eat together also are more likely to have higher intakes of fruits and vegetables and have a healthy weight, and are less likely to have behavior problems or use drugs, cigarettes or alcohol when they get older. Plus, they're closer to their parents. No wonder family meals are on the upswing.

Try these easy-to-follow tips to make family meals happen more often in your home:

- **KEEP IT SIMPLE:** Attempting to make a meal with 20 ingredients is a recipe for disaster. Instead, build a small collection of go-to recipes to help you get in and out of the kitchen in under 30 minutes.
- **CHOOSE INGREDIENTS THAT MULTITASK:** Ingredients you can use for more than one meal can be a major time saver. Instead of making just three chicken breasts, consider making six. This way, you can use the extras in other dishes such as chicken salad or fajitas.
- **SAY "NO" TO TAKEOUT:** A quick trip to the drive-thru might seem like a speedy way to get dinner on the table, but oftentimes lacks the nutrition your family needs. A simple meal made at home from lean protein, whole grains and fresh, frozen or canned vegetables is more likely to contain the nutrients your family needs without all the extra sodium and dietary fat.

- **MAKE IT A HABIT:** Make sure each family member knows that everyone is to be home for dinner at a particular time. When everyone expects to enjoy dinner at 5 p.m. on Sunday, they'll begin to look forward to this family time and will arrange their schedules around it.
- **ITS OK TO ASK FOR HELP:** You have a little army of helpers right at your fingertips. Asking kids to set the table, pour drinks or help make a salad doesn't just make your job easier – it also teaches them that taking the time and effort to eat together as a family is important. Little kids can practice counting skills by getting the correct number of forks and napkins for the table. Teens love the independence they have when shopping for groceries. Hand them some money and a grocery list and let them pick out an extra vegetable or some whole-grain bread for dinner.
- **MAKE IT FUN:** Add some fun and excitement with food themes. You can use a checkered tablecloth for an Italian-inspired meal, or prepare fresh Asian cuisine and eat with chopsticks. Throw a blanket on your family room floor and enjoy a family picnic. Let everyone choose a theme and you'll see that your choices are endless. Now that you're enjoying the meal, keep everyone involved in conversations by asking each person to share something that happened that day or week that was funny, weird, scary, good or bad.

Start your new family meal tradition today by making a commitment to eating at least one meal together each week. Many families look forward to and love their Sunday dinner tradition. Before you know it, family dinner will be a time that everyone looks forward to.

-EatRight.org

RUNNING CLUB

COME JOIN YOUR FELLOW EXPLORER FAMILIES EVERY MONDAY, WEDNESDAY, AND FRIDAY AT 7:45AM FOR RUN CLUB ON THE WASHINGTON FIELD!

MEET NEW FAMILIES, ENGAGE IN A HEALTHY ACTIVITY, AND SET PERSONAL GOALS!

Blue Zones Recipe of the Week



Andrew Zimmern's Black Beans

Canned beans are great for convenience, but dry beans, soaked and cooked over low heat for a longer amount of time can enhance the flavor profile of any dish. Andrew Zimmern crafted this recipe and shared it with us after returning from a trip to Mexico where he said this was the best meal he ate.

[CLICK HERE FOR THE RECIPE](#)

St. Patrick's Day 5K

MARK YOUR CALENDARS SOUTH BAY! SIGN UP FOR OUR ANNUAL VILLAGE RUNNER ST. PATRICK'S DAY 5K RUN/COMMUNITY WALK IN BEAUTIFUL REDONDO BEACH, CALIFORNIA!

THE NEXT RACE IS MARCH 17, 2019 AT 8:00AM.!

ALL PARTICIPANTS WILL RECEIVE A ST. PATRICK'S DAY RUN T-SHIRT. THERE WILL BE CHIP TIMING, AGE DIVISION AWARDS AND CASH PRIZES TO THE TOP THREE OVERALL MALE AND FEMALE RUNNERS IN THE 5K RUN. ALL KIDS DASH FINISHERS RECEIVE MEDALS TOO!

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE DETAILS!](#)



To eat is a necessity, but to eat intelligently is an art.

-La Rochefoucauld